



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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THREE YOUNG WHOOPING CRANES SIGHTED IN CANADA

Three young whooping cranes and 11 adults have been sighted in the Sass River area in Canada by a Canadian Wildlife Service helicopter crew, the Department of the Interior said today. This is the first report received by the Department concerning the 1961 whooper crop. Sass River is in Northwest Territories just north of Alberta.

In the group were three pairs of adults each with one young; two pairs without young; and one lone bird. Inspection of the feeding tracks indicated that two of the pairs with young were recent arrivals, indicating in turn that the young were old enough to fly.

The whoopers nest in the Wood Buffalo Park area south of Great Slave Lake in Canada. They winter along the Gulf of Mexico on Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, a migration route of about 2500 miles one way.

In the fall of 1960, there were 36 wild whooping cranes on the Aransas Refuge. Six of these were young. All 36 left the refuge in the spring heading for their summer homes in the north. In 1938-39, when recording keeping started, there were 14 wild cranes known to be in existence. The numbers have fluctuated since that time. In 1941-42, there were 15 and, in 1949-50, there were 34. There are 7 whooping cranes in captivity, including 1 hatched this year in the New Orleans Zoo.

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